

**THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION IN OUR
SCHOOL TEXT-BOOKS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649506408

The American Revolution in Our School Text-Books by Charles Altschul

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

CHARLES ALTSCHUL

**THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION IN OUR
SCHOOL TEXT-BOOKS**

The American Revolution in Our School Text-Books

AN ATTEMPT TO TRACE THE INFLUENCE OF EARLY SCHOOL EDUCATION
ON THE
FEELING TOWARDS ENGLAND
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BY
CHARLES ALTSCHUL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JAMES T. SHOTWELL
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STANFORD LIBRARY

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

973.307
A 469

COPYRIGHT, 1917.
BY GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

242608

STANFORD LIBRARY

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

THE great war has shown the importance of the teaching of history, in the formation of national ideals. From it may come either a clarification of our understanding as to the meaning of the process of which the present forms but a momentary part, or else a perpetuation of misunderstandings which prejudice and uncritical habits of mind have fastened upon us. In either case, as we see it now, the historian, with all the varied data of the past to draw upon, has in his hands more than we had formerly imagined of the moulding of opinion in the present, and therefore of the direction—in general lines—of future policies.

Unfortunately it cannot be said of those histories which are by far the most widely read, that they have been written out of a knowledge of all this varied data of the past. On the contrary, the text-books in history have more commonly been the product of a very limited knowledge of the actual facts of the subjects with which they deal. This limit of vision has naturally gone with a distortion in perspective. They have, for the most part, persisted in perpetuating ancient, uncriticized traditions which have accumulated since the events themselves, rather than attempting bravely and frankly to tell the story of what happened in the light of the time in which it happened. The text-books which have been written recently show a marked improvement in historical perspective, but unfortunately their influence has come too late to affect the generation which to-day is called upon to face the most tremendous issues of which history has record, and which is therefore bound to bring to that decision an imperfect historical judgment. For the teaching of history depends largely upon the text-books used in the schools; and upon that teaching rests, to a large degree, our conception as to the character of nations and national policies.

This has been clearly evident in the teaching of history in

Europe, where the emotional interest in the story of the past has been heightened by the shifting but ever-present conflict of national forces, so that many of the issues at stake are too vital to be treated as discarded elements of ancient things. But if it has been easy for American students to point out the fallacies in European history-books, since the theme is seen more objectively, the discovery leads us less toward complacency as to our own achievements than toward a sharpening of self-criticism. It turns us back upon ourselves for a re-examination of the kind of outlook we have acquired concerning the events and the meaning of the leading features of American history.

Fortunately already before this war the older issues of our past had ceased to dominate in the present. The nation which had conquered a continent learned, after the great task was practically completed, that this conquest was its greatest achievement. It had also willed that the soil it made its own should be free, and that the ideals of democracy should here find a safe and secure abode. America, "home of the free," earned its title by a struggle lasting century-long. From the ever-moving frontier came much of the spirit of its freedom. But this process lacked the picturesque, heroic quality of the first great struggle for liberty, and the Revolution furnished the epic of American history—until the scientific historians of to-day began to show, and the school-books to reflect, the importance of the small events of generations of peaceful lives, making real the ideals of the past.

Before the war came, therefore, a re-valuation of our history was under way. But the war has thrust criticism upon us in other ways. The present study is a good example of it. It is the work of a business-man, intensely interested in the opinions of his fellow-citizens. It makes no claim to "higher criticism". It does not deal with original sources of the history of the problem with which it deals; it is simply an analysis of the basis of that opinion about history and peoples which the author observed in those with whom he came in contact, and who, in spite of admonitions from high quarters, were more intent upon expressing those opinions than upon substantiating them by a study of fact.

It will be seen by any serious student of the period, that

Mr. Altschul has, with rare moderation, limited his survey not only to the text-books he analyzes, but also to a small portion of the subject itself. There are many other angles of approach and many other possibilities of criticism. But the author has preferred to deal thoroughly with the patent facts in his own line of inquiry. He does not attempt to evaluate the "tendencies" of the books with which he deals, nor to enter into the question of general interpretations. That, he feels, is a matter for the research historian. But the method employed is novel and the results of interest, not simply for the citizen who has only such text-book knowledge of the history of his country as is given in the books under review, but for the teacher who even to-day accepts the statements in them as authoritative and final. When the spirit of criticism is awakened in the citizen who has been trained in the old traditions, it is bound to penetrate the schools as well.

There is one large inference Mr. Altschul has justly drawn from the data, and that is that our history has been studied for the most part in a rather superficial manner. The larger inheritance of our institutions and habits of thought, being so intimate a part of us, has been taken for granted without any clear appreciation of how much of it is a product of history that reaches back, in the main, beyond the Revolution. When history is seen to be more than a succession of dramatic events, of wars and crises, an embodiment, rather, of the long life-story of social and political adjustment to ideals through changing environment, a process affecting every generation and linking the common things of daily life to the great purposes of national development, then the story of our achievement will be seen to have a different content and a more practical bearing than the epic which time and the careless memory of men have offered as its substitute. And then, corrected by a wider apprehension of its meaning, the old story, recast to meet the demands of a critical audience, will lend its inspiration to the attainment of juster ideals than provincial and misleading conceptions of a receding past.

JAMES T. SHOTWELL.

PREFACE

SINCE the outbreak of the Great War, it has been highly interesting to watch the drift of American sympathy towards the different belligerent nations, and to note the direction in which it crystallized.

The line between pro-Teuton and pro-Ally sentiment was quickly drawn, but the grouping of those who sympathized with the different Allied nations did not become apparent so soon. Since a long time, however, it has been perfectly evident that there is a very strong pro-French sentiment in this country, while there is no such broad and popular manifestation in favor of the English.

It is not difficult to understand why the sympathy for the French will always assert itself vigorously in the United States. We all cherish a grateful remembrance of the assistance given us by France during our Revolutionary War; we all followed her political difficulties during the last forty years with the deepest interest; we have always recognized and admired the achievements of her people in the arts, in literature, in science; and their generally lighter, more graceful vein charms us and appeals powerfully to our imagination.

In view of the deep significance of the present European contest, it is, however, not easy to account for the apparent lack of a similar sympathy for England—a country which is, in its way, faced with as dire a peril as France, and one which, even though she has not yet suffered as much, would probably undergo deeper humiliation, should the Allies succumb.

We all understand that the historical origin of our nation is one of the causes which dampens the enthusiasm for England; we remember the political agitation which, years ago, aroused slumbering animosities at every election, and which, even in these days, occasionally fans the flames of prejudice. Besides, we recall minor causes of irritation which have, from time to time, sown mutual distrust be-